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ARTICLE III.

CORRECTION OF A MISTAKE CONCERNING PEACE.

I REJOICE to see the periodical press so generally open to appeals on the subject of peace, and especially to find so many friends of the cause ready to improve this opportunity of easy and extensive usefulness. I have observed the past year not a few of our religious papers publishing articles well calculated to excite and repay attention ; and I cannot but hope, that through these weekly and monthly channels of influence there will ere-long be poured upon the public mind a ceaseless stream of facts, and arguments, and motives, to rouse the community, still slumbering to a very culpable degree over one of the greatest sins and evils that afflict our fallen race.

There is need of "line upon line" to disabuse the public mind of misconceptions extensively prevalent on the subject of peace ; and I was glad to find a writer, who speaks as "a Director of the American Peace Society," coming out to correct a misapprehension into which one of our own friends may seem to have fallen. The Rev. Mr. Bacon, of New Haven, Ct., had said, in a letter recently published through the columns of a very respectable and widely circulated paper,* "a fifth class of itinerant lecturers, if I read aright the shadow of coming events, will ere-long be preaching in all quarters *against the right of the magistrate to bear the sword of justice, or to protect the people from the outbreaks of wickedness.*"

I cannot suppose that Mr. Bacon in this remark had his eye upon the American Peace Society ; for he has been, I believe, one of its cordial, active friends, and not only published an able address delivered before the Hartford Peace Society, but has on other occasions advocated our cause with his wonted ability and zeal. Still I am glad the writer "took the opportunity to correct a mistake concerning the cause of peace which ought never to have been made ;" and I think the substance of his remarks, coming from such a source, worthy of a place on the pages of the society's periodical :

"1. I know that there are individuals—how numerous I cannot safely conjecture—who hold to the strict inviolability of human life, and deny the right of government to inflict cap-

* New York Observer.

ital punishment in any case, or to suppress mobs and insurrections by the sword; and I have heard of a very few persons that would fain exclude from families, schools and nations every kind and degree of physical force as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel."

"2. But such are not the views of one peace man in ten thousand among us. I have had rather extensive opportunities of observation; and this statement, so far as I can judge, is much within the truth. A very large majority of the friends of peace in this country admit the lawfulness even of wars strictly defensive;* and *nearly all* those who *deny* their lawfulness on Christian principles, and hold without qualification the doctrines laid down by our Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, still concede the *right* of civil government (Rom. 13: 1—7) to use any degree of force requisite to insure the obedience of *its own subjects*, although some of them doubt the *expediency* of capital punishments among a people so enlightened as our own."

"3. On this whole subject, however, the American Peace Society, and all its auxiliaries, are entirely silent, for the obvious reason that it does not belong to the great enterprise in which they are embarked. 'This cause,' in the language of the National Society, 'contemplates *only* the intercourse of nations, and does not involve the question concerning the right of a government to punish its own subjects with death, or to put down mobs and insurrections by the sword.' It is, indeed, very natural for a friend of peace to inquire into subjects like these; but they belong to a department entirely distinct, and the society ought not to be held responsible for what its members may think or publish on such topics. Do we reproach the cause of temperance for the religious or political heresies entertained by obnoxious portions of its friends?"

"Yet this glaring mistake has been committed by some of our most respectable papers; but I hope that writers for the periodical press will hereafter take the trouble to ascertain our principles and aims, before they repeat such sweeping slanders against one of the purest and noblest enterprises that ever tasked the energies of man."

* The writer doubtless means by the friends of peace, not merely members of our society, but all that are disposed to aid our cause; for in this sense alone can it be true.—ED. ADV.